

Great Directors: Kubrick

Lolita 1962

Friday, November 28 - Thursday, December 4, 2008



Film Information

Directed by
Stanley Kubrick

Language
English

Running Time
152 minutes

Film Notes

Such was the daring it took to adapt Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Lolita*, about a grown man who becomes infatuated with an adolescent girl, that it became a central point to the film's marketing campaign. "How did they ever make a movie of *Lolita*?" was the question asked on the original movie poster, and the answer, as you might guess, is complicated.

Following the production nightmare of *SPARTACUS*, in which Kubrick was treated by executive producer and star Kirk Douglas as little more than a hired hand, the director retreated from Hollywood and the traditional studio system. *LOLITA*, filmed in England, marked the beginnings of Kubrick's demands for creative control over his projects (though the Catholic Legion of Decency did what it could disrupt that). Its controversial subject matter aside, the process of adapting Nabokov's novel for the screen was a challenge in itself. Hired to adapt his own book, the author produced an unfilmably gargantuan 400-page screenplay.

But from that starting point, Kubrick, working with Nabokov, developed one of the great literary adaptations ever made. A decade later, critics would attack the director for his handling of Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*, most notably Pauline Kael, but with

LOLITA the reaction was quite the opposite (see the reverse side for Kael's response). Kubrick's adaption was at once faithful to the novel and yet unique to its own medium, using both the languages of literature and cinema to tell the at turns comic and tragic story of Professor Humbert Humbert.

Though he was notoriously difficult with screenwriters, and respected them to widely varying degrees, Kubrick, who became so famous for avoiding the public spotlight that he was perhaps unfairly branded a recluse, very much saw in Nabokov something he admired.

"I think Nabokov may have had the right approach to interviews," Kubrick once said. "He would only agree to write down the answers and then send them on to the interviewer who would then write the questions."

—Casey



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“I haven’t missed you. In fact, I’ve been revoltingly unfaithful to you.”

More Information

Screenplay by

Vladimir Nabokov
Stanley Kubrick

Based on the novel by

Humphrey Cobb

Featuring

Shelley Winters
Sue Lyon
Gary Cockrell
Jerry Stovin
Diana Decker
Lois Maxwell
Cec Linder
Bill Greene
Peter Sellers

Cinematography by

Oswald Morris

Original Music by

Nelson Riddle

Film Editing by

Anthony Harvey

Country of Origin

UK

“The surprising thing about LOLITA is how enjoyable it is. It’s the first new American comedy since those great days in the 1940s when Preston Sturges re-created comedy with verbal slapstick. LOLITA is black slapstick and at times it’s so far out that you gasp as you laugh.”

—Pauline Kael, 1962

Also Recommended, by Kubrick

Dr. Strangelove 1964
Barry Lyndon 1975
Eyes Wide Shut 1999